

A. Clapp
~~750~~
~~W 46~~

THE
IMITATIVE FACULTY,
ITS USE AND ABUSE:

A Lecture,

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE ACADIA LYCEUM, WOLFVILLE, N. S., FEB. 2, 1858.

BY THE

Rev. D. M. WELTON, A. B.

Baptist Minister, Windsor, N. S.

Published by Request.

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED AT THE "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER" OFFICE.

1858.

A
286 M
P W 46 I

Mr.
LADD

want
time
of al
three
other
three
short
and
endu
tered
they
heal
love
ratu
more
exce
on n
for
tryin
the
unfo
its l
adm
nion
to A

*
†
†

LECTURE.



MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN OF THE ACADIA LYCEUM:
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

WHEN invited to appear before you in this capacity, three wants led me to hesitate in consenting to do so,—the want of time for preparation, the want of a proper subject, and the want of ability to handle it. But over against these three wants I set three regards,—a regard for my Alma Mater, a regard for her other children, and a regard for the people of this village. This three-fold regard has encouraged me to ask your indulgence a short time. To look once more on my Fond Mother who produced and cherished me, and with immortal patience and kindness endured my obtuseness and stubbornness, who detected and fostered the feeblest buddings of intellectual life,—and feeble enough they were—detected and repressed whatever was opposed to the healthy developement of that life, and inspired my soul with a love of the Beautiful, the Pure, and the True in Science, in Literature, and in Art ;—to look once more on her face, to come once more within the immediate domain of her counsels and smiles, is exceedingly pleasant to her affectionate child. To look once more on my old Instructors,—these modern Gamaliels, at whose feet for nearly seven long but delightful years I sat, learning, or trying to learn, from one,* how to interpret the Book of books,—the Divine classic ; how to trace through all the Economies the unfolding of that great truth which centralizes and vitalises all its histories and prophecies and poetries ; all its promises and admonitions and rebukes :—from another,† how to hold communion with Homer and Cicero, with Demosthenes and Virgil ; how to Analyze and Synthetize their beautifully flowing sentences,

* Rev. Dr. Cramp.

† Professor Sawyer.

‡ Professor Stuart.

and thus, to some extent, be let into the discovery and appreciation of their inter-harmonies and graces :—from another,† how to deal with magnitude and number, how to travel the road leading from self-evident truths to the transcendental functions of the Calculus, and in which is, or *ought* to be, gained a discipline amply compensating for all the trials of the way ;—to look once more on their faces, and on the faces of old class-mates with whom I have shared in the same mental toil and victories, and to whom with others before me engaged in like pursuits, I feel attached by a friendship which life's rudest forces can never either mar or destroy ;—to look once more on your faces my Wolfville friends, for who does not know that you are deservedly and proverbially a peculiar people. *All* this affords me the profoundest pleasure to night.

But contrasted with this pleasure is a painful sense of inadequacy to this place and occasion. In following those* who have gone before me in this course of Lectures ; those who may perhaps be considered as fairly representing the eloquence of the Pulpit and the Legislative hall in our Province ; whose eloquence seems doubtless still to linger on your ears, still to steal, its fascinations into your souls ;—in following them I am conscious that whatever other purpose I may serve, I shall serve the purpose of magnifying their greatness at the expense of my smallness. For giants never appear so large, nor pigmies so small as when contrasted. But, if in furnishing this contrast I am acting to their advantage and your satisfaction, I should not complain. It is a relief, after having been lifted to regions where the head swims, and the eye is pained with the vastness and grandeur of the objects there brought into view, to descend where the field of vision is more circumscribed, and its objects more easily surveyed. If, then, I shall succeed this evening in letting you gently down from the dizzy eminence where my predecessors in this course have thoughtlessly and unmercifully placed you, I shall be satisfied.

My theme, shall be the *Imitative Faculty*, in treating which I shall confine my attention chiefly to its *use*, partly to its *abuse* : intending what I shall say, if worth anything at all, for the more particular benefit of students, and, generally, for the benefit of all present. For I conceive that none have a better opportunity of using this faculty to their advantage, or abusing it to their

* Reference is here made to the Rev. Wm. Summerville, A.M. and Hon. Joseph Howe.

disad
atten
you t
imita
far, a
By
used
constr
existe
which
objec
Statu
perso
effort
ferme
ing t
rance
that
every
huma
Child
to do
articl
to ex
ing t
says
old e
pensi
jocke
exper
cour
hill
buil
ture.
and
arch
pens
have
cour
or w
we
othe

disadvantage, than students. And while others are calling your attention to the examples of great men with the view of exciting you to honorable exertion, and of placing before you patterns for imitation, I have chosen this subject with the view of saying how far, and in what respects these patterns may be safely copied.

By the Imitative Faculty, I mean the power or ability that is used in the business of forming resemblances. Time need not be consumed in attempting to prove what you all admit, namely the existence of such faculty. Indeed the Imitative Arts, as *Painting* which represents to the eye by means of figures and colors any object of sight, and sometimes the emotions of the mind : and *Statuary*, imaging the marble into the form and semblance of real persons or things ; and *Music*, “ representing grandly in its noble efforts, the images of Night, Silence, Solitude ; or, picturesquely fermenting the ocean, swelling torrents to resistless rage, soothing tempests, tranquilizing disturbed elements, and diffusing fragrance through imaginary groves ” ;—*their* existence is explained by that of this faculty. Its existence may be inferred from whatever one has noticed in infancy and childhood, a time when human nature is most likely to show itself in its true features. Children are careful in observing what others do, and attempt to do the like. By the aid of this propensity they learn to utter articulate sounds. The pleasure they derive from imitation seems to explain their long continued efforts and their success in acquiring the use of oral language. “ At a little later period of life,” says one, “ after having learned to articulate, and having become old enough to take part in juvenile sports, we find the same propensity at work. With the animation and formidable airs of jockeys, they bestride a stick for a horse, and try equestrian experiments ; they conduct their small and frail carriages through courts and streets and journey with their rude sledges from one hill top to another. Ever busily engaged, they frame houses, build fortifications, erect waterworks and lay out gardens in miniature. They shoulder a cane for a musket, practice a measured step and a fierce look, and become soldiers, as well as gardeners and architects before they are men. But the operation of this propensity is not limited to children : men also do as their fathers have done before them ; it often requires no small degree of moral courage to deviate from the line of precedents. Whether right or wrong we generally feel a degree of safety much greater than we should otherwise feel, so long as we tread in the path of others.”

The propensity to imitation is as universal as our humanity. The little boy copies the exploits of his father, whom he regards as the greatest man in all the world. The little girl dresses her doll after the model of the living babe; and the mother her babe after that of the doll and persuades herself that it is one. The gay young lady and the gay young gentleman respectively arrange their dress after the style of the latest fashion; and provoked, perchance, at the representations of the mirror, would if possible wrest the features and complexion which nature has given, into a resemblance to those of some perfect ideal beauty. Childhood has its thousand patterns, and all its aims and activities are revealed, and directed to the work of their resemblance. The same is true, in principle, of manhood. The boy who donned his father's boots and made large tracks in the snow, was doing just what his father did when, in other matters, he copied the feats of a greater than himself. The faculty in question displays itself among all ranks, and all professions. Princes and philosophers, poets, preachers, mechanics, and artists, authors, and legislators, the lofty and the lowly, the old and the young, are all, to a greater or less extent, imitators.

I conclude then that man is an imitative being, that he is such by the design of the Creator. Accordingly, He who planted this faculty in the soul, gave it a deep lodgment among its constitutional elements, has provided for its exercise in the creation of myriad outer models, in reaching out after which, it is awakened and developed, and the soul changed from one image to another, or more completely perfected in the likeness of the same image. In correspondence with what is imitative in man, God has covered over the outer world with archetypes of beauty and excellence as was the veil of the temple with cherubim, and from this formative contact of the subjective faculty, with the objective pattern, man's nature may be improved and sublimed.

It will be sufficient to my present purpose to speak of Imitation under the threefold denomination of Sympathetic, Involuntary, and Intentional.

Of sympathetic Imitation little need be said, except by way of showing its existence and operation as an implanted and natural principle. There is in human feelings and in their outward signs "a power of contagious communication, by which they often spread themselves rapidly from one to another." "In general it may be remarked" says Mr. Stewart, "that whenever we see in

the c
tures
ticult
to us
looks
mela
that
yaw
by t
Mr.
adde
rest
that
anxi
bodi
wher
anot
of t
By
direc
not
expr
may
kind
and
the
tone
inst
the
imp
you
of u
wh
you
The
Ma
pro
hov
nes
of
for
the

the countenance of another individual any sudden change of features, more especially such a change as is expressive of any particular passion or emotion, our own countenance has a tendency to assimilate itself to his. Every man is sensible of this when he looks at a person under the influence of laughter, or in a deep melancholy. Something, too, of the same kind takes place in that spasm of the muscles of the jaw which we experience in yawning, an action which is well known to be frequently excited by the contagious power of example." To these statements of Mr. Stewart, as illustrative of Sympathetic Imitation, may be added the fact, that among children, when one sobs or cries, the rest are more or less affected in the same manner. So the mob that gazes at the dancer on the slack-rope. They are not only anxious for his safety, but actually writhe and balance their bodies, as they see him do. And who has not remarked that when a stroke is aimed, or ready to fall on the arm or leg of another, we naturally shrink with a sort of anticipative imitation of the person on whom the blow is about to be inflicted.

By involuntary Imitation, I mean that which does not proceed directly from deliberate choice as its cause ;—an imitation shaping not only the thoughts of individuals, but even their outward expression into a resemblance to those of others with whom they may have been brought into contact. An illustration of this kind of imitation is furnished in the relation between the Student and his Professor. While the latter is instructing the former, the former is learning unconsciously to adopt as his own the very tone and gesture used by the latter in the communication of such instruction. And, this illustration becomes the more perfect, as the instructions of the Professor are of a high order, and are imparted under some peculiarly original method. Sometimes the young preacher, by the very intonations of his voice, by his style of utterance and gesticulation, tells his auditory where and under whom he studied,—a fact, which so far as it goes, should govern young preachers in their choice of a Theological Professor, and Theological Professors in their training of young preachers. Many a public speaker, whether of the clerical, legal, or some other profession has been charged with intentional imitation, when however, his likeness to another has escaped his own consciousness. A clear and ductile mind assumes the shape and expression of a superior plastic mind as silently and certainly as operate the forces of nature, as dew drops mirror suns and "peaceful lakes the stars."

I have used the word *Intentional*, to designate another kind of imitation, and that to which, in this connection, I wish especially to call your attention. Intentional Imitation takes for granted, that we are naturally imitative, and that under proper restrictions, we may be so, to the benefit of ourselves and others. No one can doubt, from reflection, that the principle before us "was designed to be, and is in fact, one of the important supports of society, a source of knowledge, happiness and power. If this principle were obliterated the bond of union which now holds so closely together the two great divisions of society, the old and the young, would be greatly weakened. We walk in the steps of our fathers following in arts and in manners the same practices, and sustaining the same institutions. And it is in this way partly at least that generation is connected with generation; that the torch of experience, lighted in the preceding age, is made to shed its beams over that which follows, and that society kept within the vicinity of the beaten track is not subject to sudden and disastrous convulsions."

Imitation necessarily supposes the Imitator and his Model, on each of which, and keeping in view the *use* of imitation as a means especially of promoting purely intellectual growth and greatness, a few words may be said.

First then, the Imitator. *He shall be a living man.* And the canvas on which we shall trace the lineaments and complexion of his Model, shall be *his own living spirit*. In this respect he shall differ from the ordinary sculptor who works on exterior, pulseless, passionless wood or stone. *He shall be a sculptor in another and higher sense. Himself*, his own sentient nature shall be that to which his skill shall be directed, and the process of such skill shall be traced in the gradual *building up* and *completion*, and finish of his own proper manhood.

You will perceive according to this view, that the Imitator should have another aim than proficiency or even perfection in something merely mechanical or external, except, in so far, as such proficiency or perfection shall be retroactive on his own individuality, and thus contribute to its amplitude, and symmetry and excellence.

The imitation of Homer as a poet, or of Demosthenes as an orator, does not wholly or properly consist in the merely mechanical process of reading their works. Many have read Homer as often as there are days in the week, or weeks in the year, without themselves becoming Homeric, and as often have they read

Demost
reading
ful in
chamber
the sa
appre
ture o
seizing
them
a cou
might
thence
who
the li
though
of the
to give
out w
him, a
not dr
thing
havin
strive
crude
an ear
respec
of the
our a
cocke
Let
for n
tion.
dumb
insig
the f
for h
sent
than
ficial
the m

Demosthenes, without having become Demosthenean. But the reading of an author is nevertheless indispensable to his successful imitation, chiefly however, as a means of conducting to the chambers of his genius, where, somewhat unembodied, and to the same extent unobserved, its real essence may be the better apprehended and appropriated. To imitate only the outer garniture of words which mark an oration of Demosthenes, without seizing upon that which slumbers beneath them, and which beget them as naturally as suns beget light, would be the adoption of a course leading to intellectual slavery and poverty. As well might one attempt the reproduction in himself of a real Demosthenes by copying simply his bodily attire. "The genial scholar who has caught the spirit of his model and who works freely in the light of it, with a master's hand, will also adapt his own best thoughts to the modes of thinking and the familiar circumstances of the period in which he labors; and thus seem oftentimes, but to give utterance to the common thoughts of men, when bringing out with the skill of an artist, conceptions which are to live after him, and mark the period to which he belonged. But the pedant, not dreaming that the classicality of his model consists in any thing else than the incidental form which it has assumed, and having no genial sympathy with the central thought it contains, strives to give dignity and importance to vulgar thoughts and crude conceptions, by dressing them up in the cast off clothing of an earlier generation. As if we would undertake to show our respect for our fathers, and prove ourselves the worthy inheritors of their virtues by assuming their peculiar costume, and making our appearance, especially on public occasions, in short clothes, cocked-hats, and knee-buckles."*

Let me now attempt to place before the student a proper model; for much plainly depends on this, in order to commendable imitation. No one ever yet learned to excel as an orator by copying dumbness or stammering,—to rise to true greatness by copying insignificance. If the painter of natural scenery would furnish the finest specimen of his art, he would of course, draw on nature for his original. He would not be expected to furnish life-representations of rainbows and waterfalls, by copying these otherwise than as they really exist—to make roses and lilies grow on artificial flowers. Neither would the sculptor be expected to chisel the marble into the rarest proportions, and give it the blush of a

* Calvin Pease, M.A., Professor in the University of Vermont.

Venus or a Madonna, by placing before him, as his model a Cyclops or a Griffin. So the student, or any other, who would copy intellectual, or moral greatness, with a view to its inheritance, must set before him its highest, most unsullied type.

Without then, attempting a specification of model that would be suitable for any one individual, or class of students, but aiming rather to develop the normal, generic idea which should govern all imitators, I would suggest *first*, that the model be one of *real excellence*—excellence above anything of the same kind possessed by the imitator himself, otherwise his efforts at imitation can have no effect but to deform and degrade. But nowhere this side of the divine, can a model be found of which absolutely perfect excellence is predicable. Every earthly model will be found more or less imperfect. What would be regarded excellence from one point of view would be regarded less than excellent from a higher point. One man may combine in himself a greater amount of real excellence than another, and at the same time a greater amount of real deformity, I would therefore, in the *second place* suggest to our imitator, that his model possess on the whole, the most and highest excellencies, combined with the fewest and most unobjectionable defects. It is decidedly dangerous for the student, indeed for all others, to copy excellence, however excellent, when so contiguous to its opposite, as to be contorted and marred by it. The secret of this danger lies in the too universal tendency of mortals to swerve from the noblest aims, especially when influenced by collateral ignoble attractions. No musician ever thought of giving delicacy to his ear, in the presence of jarring discords. It is a question, whether or not in such circumstances, dissonance would not soon be mistaken by him for harmony. In like manner if the student propose to himself a model of undoubted excellence, but existing along with undoubted deformity, the probabilities are that he will copy the latter to the neglect of the former.

We are told that "Alexander the Great had a foolish tutor who used to call him Achilles. He was taught to admire that character. But when he came to imitate Achilles, he imitated one of the most cruel and detestable actions in that hero's life. He dragged the governor of a town through the streets after his chariot." It has been more than strongly conjectured that France murdered her King, the inoffensive and amiable Louis XVI., because England once beheaded a king. Thus nations, as well as

indiv
atroc
have
They
prove
prod
Byron
meas
geniu
and e
the c
ward
the
latter
It
never
all t
woul
other
are s
On p
were
An
whic
relic
toget
tion
why
in h
patt
a lo
neve
The
be s
off,
of i
wor
dest
tho
pati
I

individuals, on becoming imitators, some times copy that which is atrocious. Multitudes have attempted to imitate Johnson, but have succeeded in copying only his pompous, inflated language. They have grasped, as they suppose, the club of Hercules, but it proves to be hollow, and its blows have no other result than the production of sound. Many have tried to follow in the wake of Byron, none of whom will live in song. They have copied his measure and wickedness, "borrowing his vileness without his genius." Let every one, then, who would become an imitator—and every one may under proper restrictions—be duly careful in the choice of his model, and keenly discriminate between its outward form, and its inward archetypal idea, and assign value to the former only as a means of interpreting and adopting the latter.

It would, perhaps, be ascribing to human nature, what it has never exhibited, to say that any *one* man may combine in himself all that variety and amplitude and finish of character which would entitle him to be regarded a perfect model for imitation of others. But among the ruins magnificent of our nature, there are some gems. A defunct royalty may still wear its insignia. On passing down the stream of time, as if to remind of what we were, and what we shall be, we see here and there a relic of Eden.

And here I am led, as seeking a still higher model, and the last which I shall mention in this connection, to propose that these relics of Eden, these traces of primeval greatness, be brought together and constructed into an *ideal* manhood, at whose realization our imitator may ever aim. Indeed no reason can be assigned why abstract virtues or qualities, which have had no illustration in human actions, may not thus be combined and chosen as a pattern,—why the student may not carry in his own conceptions a lofty type of scholarly manhood and greatness, such perhaps as never existed in fact, but which he might ever seek to actualize. There is no reason why all the enlightened humanities may not be summoned before him,—why all their jewelry may not be cast off, and melted and moulded—not into a calf,—but into an image of intellectual worth and beauty, which might be imitated if not worshipped, and which no angered Moses would have occasion to destroy. Here the noblest incentives would stir his breast, here the most healthy airs would play about his temples, and in this path he would reach his highest level.

I cannot help thinking that the most distinguished scholars and

men who have lived,—whose names have received the fairest chronicle, have been imitators in this way,—have set before them an ideal greatness, as clear and well-defined as a quartz crystal, and which, at length they have measurably realized in themselves. To aim at resemblance to such model, would be subjection to an influence that would touch the terms and transmute them into values;—an influence that would give stature to the mind and replenish its forces; that would reach

“ And spread the beauteous images abroad
Which else lie furled and shrouded in the soul.”

Who shall say that Washington, a man of great variety and compass of character; whose faculties and virtues were balanced and blended as perfectly as the colors of the spectrum in the solar beam; so that if we fail to see their splendor, it is because it is lost in their harmony;—a man whose prudence and discernment and integrity and patriotism have won for him the profound respect of every lover of freedom;—who shall say that he did not keep before him an *ideal* pattern, which shed the noblest forces on his soul and reproduced itself in him? Who shall say that Wellington, Washington's great synonyme,—the man who has decided and shaped the destinies of the Old World,—whose name is embalmed at the very core of England's great heart,—who shall say that his greatness was not the growth of similar aims? Who shall say that Livingston, the African Columbus, who, attended by his faithful Lekelutu, has endured and conquered all but impossibilities; “fought with Pachyderms and Ophidia,” lived on “roots and locusts and frogs,” and as the result, “opened to light a world teeming with floral, animal and mineral wealth and wonder,—who shall say that he was urged on solely by the love of exploration, irrespective of a desire to illustrate in himself what he conceived should be the character of one attempting and accomplishing what he would? Who shall say that Milton, as splendid ideal creations leaped from his mind; and his imagination with a kind of kaleidoscopic power, shed on its own princely children the rarest tints of life and beauty, did not keep steadily before him a definite picture of the true poet and the play of poetry in true manhood? Who shall say that Bacon, the instaurator of the Sciences, a man of “amazing versatility, of most diversified talents and attainments, whose originality was equalled only by his learning and taste, and whose essays on moral and religious subjects are as just and beautiful as his philosophical and scientific treatises are original and profound,” who shall say that his character

as a scholar, in its wonderful completion and comeliness, was not the realization of an ideal one which he had proposed to himself as his model? And the same may be affirmed of all those whose names adorn the annals of Learning and Belles-lettres,—of Homer and Virgil and Milton among the Poets; of Demosthenes and Pitt and Webster among Orators and Statesmen; of Locke and Newton and Franklin among Philosophers; of Livy and Macaulay and Bancroft among Historians; of Cicero and Addison and Everett among Essayists; and last, but not least, of Chalmers and Hall and Edwards among preachers and Theologians. These men would spurn to stoop their massive frames to walk under a lintel reared by others; still they were imitators in the way just defined,—a species of imitation which exalts without compromising one's own independence and personality.

It will be seen from a moment's reflection, how nearly this sort of imitation resolves itself into the question of a proper life-purpose. To trace the course of one who has set before him no model, and is therefore liable to be conformed to whatever happens to be the prevailing influence for the time being, is but to portray the deformity of an aimless and therefore shapeless life.

As well might the traveller attempt the circumnavigation of the globe, returning, however, to lodge at his own home every night, as for mortals to do anything, or become anything without a settled controlling life purpose. It will be found that, in the majority of cases, the eminence to which many have risen, has been the result not more of patience and perseverance, than of a well directed aim. Indeed such aim is and must be the very spinal column of all real greatness. Without it patience and perseverance can have no effect, but to build what has been termed "an Amorphous pile, pointing every way but to the Zenith."

Of course the purpose of life should not transgress the limit indicated by the conscious possession of one's powers to accomplish it. Many have peopled their future with castles as splendid as any ever born in the dreams of Arabian Knights; but built of gossamer, and having no foundation, the tiniest force alas! has demolished them all. The noblest aim will prove useless unless warranted and guided by wisdom.

But the disposition to set too high an aim, if such a thing can be, does not show itself so strongly and frequently, as that to set too low an aim or none at all. The fact that so many stop at the

commonest level, and stop there forever, and have evident satisfaction in stopping there ;—the fact that so many men never reach even this position, are contented to wear the image of men without being moved by one manly inspiration or aspiration, demonstrates the truth of this assertion. When we see persons belonging to any one of the professions, satisfied in performing their prescribed duties, and coming even short of that ;—having no disposition, putting forth no effort to lift their profession into a higher, juster estimation, to invest it with new and nobler attractions, we are forced to suspect that their model, if they have any, is nothing more than mediocre. When we see students, or persons professing to be students, taking up only a part of the studies of the regular course, and stopping with *them* a year or two before the course is completed, we are led to ask what master of what ancient or modern school they have chosen as their pattern? Gentlemen of the Acadia Lyceum the bounds of your habitation may be so settled, and apparently providentially so, that to you it may seem impossible that they should be enlarged, in which case the humblest endeavors after the humblest attainments are laudable ; but beware how you adopt a partial course, so called, and assign as your reason a providential necessity. Many a student has found an explanation of his moderate attainments in the allotment of Providence, whereas it ought to have been found in his own slothfulness. Others may enjoy their own opinion, but I will take this opportunity of saying, that I attach but little importance to partial courses, especially as a means of laying a proper foundation for finished scholarship.

You may with a limited amount of Collegiate training play an important part in life's drama ; you may by your after diligence become able to " write Dictionaries, edit Classics, and dream in other languages," but you may rest assured you will never get much credit for it, especially from those remembering the superficialness of your first attainments. It cannot have escaped your own observation how many there are apparently unmoved and immovable amid the highest inducements to mental culture. It is as if some fearful paralysis had struck their souls, sealing up their functions. They neither see nor care to see what prospect lies before them, and might therefore, as well be the fishes hooked up in the Mammoth Cave rivers, which have no eyes. They look upon life about as intelligently as the rock protruding from the cliff of Blomedon looks upon the sea.

A settled plan, and steadfastness in carrying it out, are indispensable to progress in any of the callings of life. It has been truly observed that "The man who is perpetually hesitating which of two things he will do first, will do neither. The man who resolves, but suffers his resolutions to be changed at the first counter suggestion of a friend,—who fluctuates from opinion to opinion, from plan to plan, and veers like a weather-cock, to every point of the compass, with every breath of caprice that blows, can never accomplish anything great or useful. Instead of being progressive in anything, he will be at best stationary, and more probably retrograde in all.

It is only the man who carries into his pursuits that great quality which Lucan ascribes to Cæsar,—*nescia virtus stare loco*,—who first consults wisely, then resolves firmly, and then executes his purpose with inflexible perseverance, undismayed by those petty difficulties which daunt a weaker spirit, that can advance to eminence in any line. Let us take by way of illustration, the case of a student. He continues the study of the dead languages; presently comes a friend who tells him he is wasting his time, and that instead of obsolete words, he had much better employ himself in acquiring new ideas. He changes his plans and sets to work on mathematics. Then comes another friend who asks him, with a grave and sapient face, whether he intends to become a professor in the College; because if he does not, he is misemploying his time; and that for the business of life, common mathematics is quite enough of the mathematics. He throws up his Euclid and addresses himself to some other study, which in its turn, is again relinquished on some equally wise suggestion; and thus life is spent in changing his plans. You cannot but perceive the folly of his course; and the worst effect of it is, the fixing on the mind the habit of indecision, sufficient of itself to blast the finest prospects. No! take your course wisely but firmly, and having taken it, hold upon it with heroic resolution, and the Alps and Pyrenees will sink before you. The whole empire of learning will be at your feet. Let your motto be,—*Perseverando vinces*. Practice upon it, and you will be convinced of its value by the distinguished eminence to which it will conduct you." The late Moses Stuart remarked "While one man is deliberating whether he had better study a language, another has obtained it. Such is the difference between decisive energetic action, and a timid hesitating, indolent manner

of pursuing literary acquisitions. And, what is worst of all, in this temporizing class of students, is, that if you reason with them, and convince them that they are pursuing a wrong course, that conviction operates no longer than the next paroxysm of indolence, or a worldly spirit comes on. These siren charmers lull every energetic power of the mind to sleep. The mistaken man, who listens to their voice, finds himself at the age of forty, just where he was at thirty. At fifty, his decline has already begun. At sixty he is universally regarded with indifference, which he usually repays with misanthropy. And if he has the misfortune to live until he is seventy, every body is uneasy because he is not transferred to a better world."

Before taking leave of this part of my subject, I will name one or two models, and say a word or two respecting how they should be imitated, confining myself to the department of Oratory and Poetry.

As the model Orator, your thoughts are doubtless turned at once to Demosthenes.

"Imitation in Oratory," says Rosseau, "is an endeavor to resemble a speaker or writer in those qualities, with regard to which we propose them to ourselves as patterns." The use of imitation normally considered, is finely illustrated, in the success, which has crowned the efforts of many who have sought for models in the ancient schools. Cicero tells us that the finest historians among the Romans were very dry and jejune, till they began to imitate the Greeks, and then they became their rivals." It is well known how closely Virgil has imitated Homer in his *Æneid*, Hesiod in his *Georgics*, and Theocritus in his *Eclogues*. Horace tells us in his *Epistle to Augustus*, (Lib. II.), that Terence copied Meander, and Plautus after Epicarmus. And Horace himself, it would seem, owes many of his beauties to the Greek lyric poets. Cicero, who speaks of the dryness of the first historians among the Romans, until they began to imitate the Greeks, doubtless imitated the Greeks himself as carefully as any of them. Thus Quintilian says of him, "he has expressed the strength and sublimity of Demosthenes; the copiousness of Plato; and the delicacy of Isocrates." Demosthenes himself, whom I have named as standing first in the school of Oratory, as is well known, copied Thucydides' History eight times with his own hand merely to make himself acquainted with the style of that great man. "If our would-be orators would do the same with Demosthenes,

turnin
eight
This
as ap

Turn
proce
"giv
to th
the r
subm
migh
prof
puri
ners

It
sent
Uni
of
true
and
Pau
ing
adr
fan
lar
sid
be
De
ex
bo
fr
pe
id
of
n

t
-

turning them backwards and forwards from Greek to English, eight successive times, their profiting would greatly appear." This was oftener done in the days of Roman education than now, as appears from the direction—

"Vos exemplaria Græca,
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna."

Turn over with a daily and nightly hand the Grecian models. This process would raise the style of instruction at our Colleges, and "give it the literary and moral interest that should be attached to the study of the Classics. It would elevate the teacher above the mere drill-master, which he altogether refuses to become, or submits to be with an impatient grace. It would give those mighty minds of Greek and Roman name, that influence over our professional men and our literature, which they ought to exert, purifying the taste, enlarging the knowledge, refining the manners, and adding weapons of ethereal temper to the armory."*

It is a position taken almost universally by scholars of the present day, and finding an able advocate in Prof. Felton of Harvard University, that the Apostle Paul is largely indebted to the study of Demosthenes, for several characteristics of his style. It is true the late DeWette and Winer, distinguished German scholars and theologians, have pronounced it improbable that the Apostle Paul acquired any appreciable benefit from the old Hellenic learning and literature. "But we must advance a step further, and admit the probability of his having not merely read, but become familiar with several of the old Greek writers, and more particularly that he has modeled the language of his Epistles, to a considerable extent, upon the orations of Demosthenes."† It will be found difficult, from a careful comparison of the styles of Demosthenes and Paul, not to believe that the latter was, to some extent at least, an imitator of the former. Paul has certainly borrowed passages from the popular poets, on three occasions,—from the *Phœnomena* of Aratus, (Act xvii. 28.), from the comic poet Menander, (1. Cor. xv. 33.) and (Tit. i. 12.) from Epimenides of Crete. It may be assumed that he had also read several of the popular orators, and surely the most celebrated of their number, Demosthenes of Athens.

Kypke, in his "*Observationes Sacre*," has collected from all the Pauline Epistles, several and striking parallels with Demos-

*Rev. Noah Porter, Junr., Springfield, Massachusetts.

† Dr. Friedrich Koster of Stade.

thenean forms of expression,—a fact leading to the conclusion that he had read and was familiar with Demosthenes, the model of Greek popular eloquence, and had involuntarily appropriated many of his expressions." Koster adds, "if the great Apostle was not ashamed, in furtherance of the end he had in view, to learn something from the attic orator, can it be unbecoming for our clergy to refresh and fertilize their minds by the study of the ancient classic writers?"

As model Poets I mention Homer among the ancients, and Milton and Shakespeare among the moderns. There is reason to believe that Milton, and perhaps Shakespeare, imitated Homer; and some have supposed that Homer himself was an imitator of the Hebrew poets—of Moses and David. Of Shakespeare, it may be remarked, he bears a stronger resemblance to Homer than does Milton. I refer to his universality, his power to reproduce the past in the present, and from the present to predict the future. Says Prof. Tyler, speaking of his historical plays and dramas, "Observation, memory, reflection, judgment, imagination, wit, reason, conscience, philosophy, poetry, comedy, tragedy, songs, sermons, the great and good, the vile and vulgar; in short, men and things as they are in real life, all are there, for he is the myriad minded, and a mirror of the world." After all the attention that has been given to Shakespeare, his character as a poet, is not yet fully understood and appreciated.

It would be difficult to lay down specific rules, which it would be well to follow in imitating any of the ancient masters. One or two however, suggest themselves as proper and indispensable. They may be indicated by the words *attention* and *discrimination*.

For example, if Homer be taken for the model poet, *attention* should be given to his language, to the meaning of its words, to their various shades of meaning in different connections, and their peculiar arrangement in sentences, under such restrictions, however, as have been already intimated. Beyond this, *attention* should be given to the treatment of his subject, to his skill in the introduction of certain characters in certain places, to the timely occurrence of imagery, to his life-like delineations, to his perfect naturalness, to his sympathy with men of all classes and conditions, in all their pleasures, pains, and pursuits, to his impartiality and universality, to his harmony and method,—his law and order. These things have contributed to render his poems purely classic,—“the rule and standard of the Epic for all time.”

But
get in
not fail
of Hom
his the
also di
and O
colored
speak
sympa
becom
of pro
contri
tion o
age, v
A v
dress
the la
langu
repre
and
appr
hime
but
part
head
bird
his
I
que
S
ext
the
To
ha
ing
an
St
fa

But the largest attention to these things is not sufficient to begot in our imitator a likeness to his Homeric model. He must not fail, as already expressed, to *discriminate* between the language of Homer and his thoughts. His language is but the mantle of his thoughts,—the body of which they are the soul. He must also *discriminate* between the Homeric age and his own. Illiads and Odysseys must be purely indigenous productions,—must be colored by the age which produces them, and, at the same time speak in concert with the promptings of that universal taste and sympathy which have been found to mark every age. Whoever becomes a Homer in the nineteenth century must lay its marvels of progress and refinement under the same simple and natural contribution that Homer did the barbaric rudeness and superstition of his age. “A great man is the synopsis and epitome of his age, with its interests and influences.”*

A wise discrimination between an author's thoughts and their dress may serve to prevent giving an exaggerated importance to the latter at the expense of the former. Whoever looks to mere language regardless of the soul-wealth which it may enshrine and represent, is learning to imitate only in the capacity of indigence and slavery,—“to fasten on the outward form, with no genial apprehension of the essential spirit,” and thus to reproduce in himself, not the statuesque symmetry and beauty of his model, but the disproportion and ugliness of a monster. He is acting the part of Horace's painter, who joined the neck of a horse to the head of a man, and having strangely blended the plumage of birds with the beauty of woman in the limbs and body, finished his picture by giving it the tail of a fish.

I turn now to a consideration of the *abuse* of the faculty in question.

So far I have attempted, though very imperfectly, to specify the extent to which imitation may be practiced, without conceding in the act the free and natural and highest action of one's own powers. To point out the way in which this faculty, which the Creator has given us for a good purpose, may be used, without transgressing, in any respect, the limits of that purpose, supposes an amount of discernment greater than is possessed by your speaker. Still he is persuaded, other things being equal, that the use of the faculty, as just defined, would not only not interfere with, but

* Thomas Carlyle.

actually subserve the most unbiased and untrammelled intellectual effort. Beyond these limits, we come into the regions of its abuse. Time need not be consumed in speaking of that very common abuse of the faculty, which we see in the imitation of such models as are furnished, for example, in the fluctuations of fashion, and in the tastes and habits of would-be-original characters.* This abuse of the faculty is almost wholly confined to certain weak-minded people, who seem to take particular pleasure in saying and doing and appearing as some others are wont to say and do and appear. But as these persons have no place in this auditory, and for the sake of relevancy to my design, I will direct your attention to another phase of its abuse, which is also quite common, even among those who have the reputation of being wise and great. I refer to those aspiring to, or filling the place for example, of learners, instructors, editors, authors, statesmen, scholars, poets, preachers. Who does not know that one real poet is sometimes sufficient to set up a thousand? Who does not know that all along down the ages, many have lit their feeble tapers at the torch of a Homer or a Shakespeare, and after all, the world has produced but one Homer and one Shakespeare. Who has read Alexander Smith's *Life Drama*, without having observed how completely he has sacrificed his own identity on the altar of imitation of Bailey's *Festus*? Who does not know that the famous London preacher is reproducing himself all over the world,—that not only do some say and do what Spurgeon does in their own way, but even attempt to say and do what Spurgeon does in Spurgeon's way? And still there is and will be but one Spurgeon. Who is not aware of the wide-spread and wide-spreading contagion of authorship in these times;—that tens of thousands are writing big books, not because capable of enlightening mankind on any subject, nor because they expect to do so, but because they are desirous of travelling some path which has been travelled by a greater than themselves. To borrow a Socratic illustration, they remind us of the little man, who made himself ridiculous by stretching his tiny legs to walk in the footsteps of a giant; who also bowed himself, as would a giant, when walking under some low place. Who does not know that one great

* It is told of one of the kings of England, that one day while engaged in a hunting excursion, he lost the pendant parts of his coat. On the next day his court, and many of the citizens of London, fond of imitating the king, made their appearance with *their* coats similarly diminished.

scholar
nation
myriad
by his
studen
ries, sp
Æolie
their
Digam
Or if
stenbe
a Nie
more
one, h
when
follow
to a fl
other
sheep
in the
flock
gent
foot
jump
rest
trati
who
from
“
mer
the
act
and
me
ric
th
an
ph
ju
st
t

scholar sometimes becomes a pattern for all the scholars of a nation;—that passing like a sun through the literary firmament, myriad lesser orbs constellate themselves around him, and shine by his reflected light? Thus in Germany, for instance, if some student, whom no amount nor protraction of study wears or wearies, spends a long life-time in writing a work, perchance on the *Æolic Digamma*; a host of admirers and imitators at once make their appearance, and also write a work, if not on the *Æolic Digamma*, on some other subject equally important and profound. Or if one of their great scholars, as a Schliermacher, or a Hengstenberg, or a DeWette, or a VonSchlegel, or a Blumenbach, or a Niebuhr, or a Tholuck,—who does not know that if one or more of these embrace some new doctrine, or renounce some old one, hundreds and thousands of students are ready to observe when and where and how they turn the corner, that they may follow after, Very justly did Thomas Carlyle compare mankind to a flock of sheep, which said he, “at all hazard follow each other, and the bell wether.” In illustration of this gregarious, sheepish tendency, I am reminded of what was told me by a friend in the neighboring republic. He went one day in search of his flock which had strayed from his premises. After a long and diligent search he found them all dead and lying in a heap at the foot of a certain precipice. One daring sheep had ventured to jump off, and as the consequence, had broken his neck; and the rest bound to follow, met the same fate:—a very striking illustration, thought I, of the conduct of many in the world of letters, who presuming to imitate the exploits of their superiors, leap from the precipice and die.

“No man,” said Dr. Johnson, “was ever great from imitation, meaning, it is presumed, that kind of imitation which involves the sacrifice and burial of one’s own independence in thought and action.” “My father,” says Andrew Fuller, “was a farmer; and in my younger days, it was a great boast among the ploughmen, that they could plough a straight line *across* the furrows or ridge of the field. I thought I could do this as well as any of them. One day I saw such a line which had just been drawn, and I thought, now I have it! Accordingly, I laid hold of the plough, and putting one of the horses into the furrow which had just been made, I resolved to keep him walking in it, and thus secure a parallel line. By and by, however, I observed that there were what might be termed *wiggles* in this furrow; and

when I came to them, they turned out to be larger in mine than in the original. On perceiving this, I threw the plough aside and determined *never to be an imitator*." No one can read the works of that great divine without believing that he adhered steadfastly to his purpose.

But, to set forth, more formally and definitely the abuse of the faculty under consideration, I will mention some things to which such abuse is opposed. And first it is opposed to *originality*.

Originality may be that of *thought* or *character*;—of thought as expressed in conversation or writing;—of character as expressed in action. Originality of thought must be distinguished from *singularity*. Not every singular student or man, is an original one. Singularity may surprise and amuse, but can never be admired and approved. Much more must originality be distinguished from absurdity and extravagance. Thoughts involving contradictions are absurd;—departing from nature and truth are extravagant. "An original thought" says Prof. Hopkins, accords with the constitution of things and the processes of nature, which are always simple and beautiful;"—a definition obviously correct, whether in regard to the purely imitative arts, or to different species of composition, as the narrative, descriptive, or fictitious. Said the writer just named, "the keenest and most comprehensive observer of nature will be the greatest original. Genius itself, is but a quick observation of nature, and a ready power of combining the materials which she has furnished." Let him then who would be truly original in *thought*, and *speech*, and *writing*, instead of insulting his own powers through a blind and wholesale imitation of others, lift the veil from nature, and so drink through his soul her mysterious influence, that he may himself be natural and to the same extent original.

If man were a purely intellectual being, originality of thought and originality would be identical. "Originality of character" to quote Prof. Hopkins again, "is constituted by a course of action at once differing from that ordinarily pursued, and at the same time, conformed to those principles of taste, of rectitude, and of benevolence with which the permanent well-being of man is connected. It is its germination from these principles which alone can legitimate singularity, which can remove it equally from affectation and pride, and cause the line of human conduct, instead of running athwart the intention and providence of God, to harmonize with them."

The action of Howard and Raikes who devoted their lives, the one to the imprisoned, and the other to the young, sprang from those

principle
hence, th
regarded
well as l
because
the peop
apprehen
military

It mu
action o
through
Your at
virtually
and act
attempt

Many
but has
the sam
exhibit
and let
origin

I ne
is that
sidera
to the
study
ginal
tered
obser
one p
He c
throu
laws
equa
laws
tals.

"
He
slee
wer
he

principles which have their foundation in the nature of man, and hence, though unappreciated at the time, they have now come to be regarded, as what might perhaps be termed *classic*; for actions as well as language, may have it should seem, this appellation. It was because Washington correctly apprehended the essential dignity of the people, and of their right of self-government, and acted on this apprehension, that he stands before us not as the ordinary successful military chieftain, but as the truly *original, typical man*.

It must be obvious to all that this originality of thought and action cannot be otherwise than interfered with, or were sacrificed through a slavish imitation of the thoughts and actions of others. Your attempt to rise to manly eminence by an imitative process that virtually ignores the existence and exercise of your own powers and activities, will be found as fruitless as those of the man who attempted to climb the fence by lifting at his own boot straps.

Many a one has conceived what to him seemed an original thought but has been surprised, perhaps disappointed, on afterwards meeting the same thought elsewhere and under an equally just and beautiful exhibition,—a fact showing that we may do as others have done, and leave the same traces of doing, without any sacrifice of claim to originality.

I need not stop to show how far removed from genuine originality, is that which so often aspires to it, and passes for it, and has considerable currency in almost every college and university. I refer to that which enables some students to get their "lessons without studying them, or reciting them without getting them." This original character—the idol of the school, is generally indulged, flattered, admired. And why should it not be? For as has been truly observed "he can achieve almost impossibilities. He can go from one point to another without passing over the intervening space. He can read the orations of Demosthenes by instinct, and can see through the metaphysics of Aristotle by intuition. The College laws he comprehends and masters by a process equally summary, equally original, equally transcendental. Indeed he is above all laws, human and divine. Laws, rules, precepts, are for meaner mortals. He is a law unto himself.

"Often he tramples under foot the laws of bodily health and life. He turns night into day, and day into night, eats and drinks and sleeps when others study, and studies when others sleep; for if he were once *known* to *study* like his class-mates and fellow students, he would lose his reputation for original and creative genius. No

one thing so characterizes him as the intensity of his desires and efforts to be unlike other bipeds. He is no imitator,—is determined not to be. And he *is* about as distinct from the proper type of humanity as the strutting and crowing two legged animals without wings which Diogenes plucked and turned into the academy exclaiming, see Plato's man. If he belong to the genus 'Homo sapiens,' it must be among certain rare specimens in the species *Sapientissimus*. If a new genus were created and denominated *ipse*, he would fall inevitably, nay, would rush eagerly into the species *ipsissimus*.*

Secondly, The abuse of this faculty is opposed to *progress*. I refer particularly to intellectual progress under its ordinary phases of exhibition. No argument is necessary to prove that the amplest, most finished mental culture cannot be reached, when, through any dependence on artificial helps, or adoption by imitation of what belongs to another, the energies of the mind are left unelicited—unemployed. David could sling stones and slay giants better in *his own* than in Saul's armor. So the student who would master the difficulties of learning—would carry the head of Goliath,—the rewards of victory in his own hand, must summon his own energies resolutely to the task. Those islands which adorn the Pacific like so many Edens, were reared up from the bed of the ocean, by the little coral insect which deposits only one grain of lime at a time. So the greatest results of mind are produced by untiring and continuous effort. But the student will toil in vain who aims at the highest and most harmonious developement of his powers, through a species of imitation that virtually overlooks their existence. He will look in the wrong direction, and use the wrong means for the largest and most important results. He will thus find his parallel in the hero of the nursery tale, who sought for large fish in shallow waters :—

" Master Simon went a fishing
For to catch a whale;
All the water he had got
Was in his mother's pail."

Again the *abuse* of this faculty is opposed to *independence*.

We love to see an independent man,—independent according to the best acceptation of the term ;—a man not unduly biased or influenced by others. Absolute and perfect independence, can of course, be predicated of none but Jehovah. In one sense every thing from the molecule to the planet, from the insect to the Arch-

* Professor Tyler, Amherst College, Massachusetts.

angel is
He has
claim th
I do not
gance of
sumptio
every co
and the
one wh
others.
penden
opposit
equal,
wards
The
Let
idiosyn
imitate
ed up
leon,—
Wh
ing th
he est
of th
publi
entir
reje
in o
A
to in
mir
he l
ved
of
anc
in
te
to
in
m

angel is dependent on him. Still there is an independence which He has delegated to every man, in virtue of which every man may claim the right of self-direction,—of thinking and acting for himself. I do not mean the independence that is only another name for arrogance or dogmatism,—that is the offspring of ignorance and presumption,—a kind of independence of too great currency in almost every community. It is decidedly refreshing, I repeat, to see here and there, in the strictest sense, an independent thinker and actor,—one who has not sacrificed his own identity to the imitation of others. The independent student,—and if any ought to be independent, it is he; if any one is thrown amid temptations to the opposite, it is he,—the independent student, other things being equal, will be more likely than any other, to reap the aims and rewards of study.

The abuse of this faculty is opposed moreover to *individuality*.

Let every man, whether a student or otherwise, retain his own idiosyncrasy, *never give it up*. But no one can do this who slavishly imitates others, and thus allows his own individuality to be swallowed up in theirs. Such imitation changes the imitator into a chameleon,—gives him the color of the individual he happens to copy.

When Massillon arrived in Paris he was asked his opinion concerning the most celebrated pulpit orators of that period. He replied he esteemed the excellencies of each, but did not wish to take any of them as a pattern for himself. It has been truly remarked of public speaking that it "stands in the closest connection with the entire personality. Where this has something decided, it not only rejects conscious imitation, but seeks to break new paths for itself, in order to unfold itself the more fully."

At the commencement of his ministry, Robert Hall was disposed to imitate a certain divine whose talents and culture he greatly admired and respected. The fact was noticed by his hearers, whom he happened to overhear speaking of it. At that moment he resolved never to imitate another,—to be himself in the pulpit and out of it. He adhered to his purpose, and ever after, all that he said and did was peculiarly characteristic of Robert Hall and none other.

Once more, the abuse of this faculty is opposed to *Positiveness* in character, by which I mean its actualness, its reality of existence—not mere negation. This *positiveness* is directly auxiliary to eloquence, "securing justness and force of conception, and inspiring an easy and adequate utterance. And the reason why many men who have knowledge, taste, fancy, judgment, are yet

not eloquent to move their contemporaries, is often that they have not this great quality beneath. They want supremacy over hearers and the theme. They want the sympathy which this generates in others. There was useful philosophy in Lord Wellington's reply, when Sir George Murray declined to accept a place in his cabinet, alleging as the reason, that he was no public speaker. 'Cant speak,' said the Duke; 'What's the matter with the man? let him speak as I speak, say what he thinks and not quote Latin.' **

It is doubtless this *positiveness* that contributes largely to Spurgeon's power over the thousands whom he addresses. They see in him one who has not blindly imitated others;—one who does not therefore speak with the timorousness of mere copyists, but says what he means and means what he says. Thus he seizes the attention, and the very heart of his hearers with an everlasting grip, from which they could not if they would, and would not if they could, free themselves.

When Garrick, the celebrated comedian, was asked by a clergyman friend—"Why is it that you have thousands to hear you preach fiction, while I have not hundreds to hear me preach truth?" he replied, "the reason is this, I preach fiction as though it were the truth, while you preach truth as though it were fiction."

Said a graduate of yonder (Acadia) College, when I tell a man anything, I place my two eyes on his two eyes, and tell him *earnestly*, and whether it be a lie or the truth, he always believes me.

I have thus, my hearers, very imperfectly pointed out the *use* of the Imitative Faculty, when kept within certain limits: also its *abuse* when these limits are transgressed. I have purposely avoided reference to *one* model which may be imitated to any extent without any abuse of the faculty in question; because this phase of the subject belongs more properly to the preacher than to the Lyceum lecturer. I refer to that model which has been furnished in the "Man of Sorrows," a likeness to whom is the only certain passport to participation in his companionship and glory in the "great beyond."

In conclusion. I thank you for your kindness and attention, and hope that you will all set before you the noblest models, and make most commendable progress in their imitation. Especially

* Dr. Storrs, Jr., Brooklyn, N. Y.

would
impor
dence
nobly
color
Nova
in the

would I urge on you, the members of the Acadia Lyceum, the importance of high aims, and of diligence and manly independence in all your literary pursuits; that you may do your parts nobly to the inauguration of a provincial literature,—a literature colored by your own spirits and by our own skies; that our own Nova Scotia, so rich in natural wealth, may also become famous in the earth for her superior wealth of mind.

FINIS.